

Huckleberry
CH-19
Popes Creek vic.
Private

First quarter 19th century

Huckleberry, is a 1 ½ story, 2-part frame dwelling that served as the home of Thomas A. Jones, Civil War Chief Signal Agent north of the Potomac and abettor to Lincoln's assassins. Jones was likely one of the most actively involved citizens in the Confederate cause and carried passengers, goods and mail across the river into Virginia daily. Near the close of the war, Jones and his family moved from a nearby farm to Huckleberry, residing here at the time of Abraham Lincoln's assassination and the conspirator's escape through Southern Maryland. Although a handful of Charles County citizen's participated in Booth's escape, Jones had the most frequent and intimate contact with the Lincoln assassins. His account of these events were published locally in The Times in 1881 and republished for sale at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.

The dwelling was extensively renovated during the mid-20th century when a service wing was added to the west wall, dormers were constructed, and elaborate Federal-style details were applied to the original austere exterior. Although the dwelling has been extensively altered, the site is significant as one of the County's important areas of action during the Civil War.

CH-19
Huckleberry
Popes Creek
Private

c. 1810?

A small, three-bay frame house, Huckleberry was the home of Thomas A. Jones, a Confederate agent and one of several men who assisted John Wilkes Booth in his escape to Virginia following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-19

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Huckleberry
other

2. Location

street and number 9270 Loyola Retreat Road not for publication
city, town Popes Creek X vicinity
county Charles

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Corp. of Roman Catholic Clergymen
street and number P.O. Box 9 telephone 301-392-0809
city, town Faulkner state MD zip code 20632

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 63 p. 1
city, town La Plata liber 981 folio 115

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report
☐ Other

6. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Current Function | Resource Count |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | Contributing Noncontributing |
| X building(s) | X private | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade | 1 3 buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> defense | sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | | X domestic | structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | | <input type="checkbox"/> education | objects |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> funerary | 1 3 Total |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> government | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> health care | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> religion | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> social | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> unknown | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: | |
| | | | Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory |
| | | | 1 |

7. Description

Inventory No. CH-19

Condition

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> altered |

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Huckleberry, standing near Popes Creek Road facing south, is a heavily restored 1 1/2 story, 2-part frame dwelling with exterior end chimneys flanking the main block. The dwelling was extensively renovated during the mid-20th century when a service wing was added to the west wall and dormers constructed. At this time Federal-era details were added including dentils adorning the cornice along with an elaborate pediment and pilasters surrounding the principal entrance. The foundation was also reconstructed using continuous concrete blocks. Windows throughout consist of 6/6 wood sash. The interior has an overall 4-room plan with a rear stair chamber behind the main parlor in the northeast corner. Huckleberry, likely constructed during the first quarter of 19th century, is now associated with a 235 acre parcel including a handful of nearby 20th century outbuildings.

The front elevation faces south and consists of an asymmetrical grouping of two windows flanking the doorway. Above are two dormer windows piercing the roofline. The east gable is dominated by the offset chimney with paved shoulders. Two first floor and two attic story windows light the interior rooms. A likely original beaded cornice distinguishes this elevation. The rear elevation includes two first floor and two attic story 6/6 windows, each located near the end corners.

According to written accounts, during the mid-19th century, Huckleberry consisted of about 500 acres and included "a one-story garret house with a low pitched roof, end chimneys and a door in the middle." A stable stood to the north and a barn to the south. The dwelling was approximately one mile from the river. Early photographs reveal the presence of a full width shed roof porch on the front elevation. Neither dormers, nor a service wing were visible, and are presumed to date from the mid-20th century restoration period.

The interior consists of a 4-room first floor plan. Two and three part mantels are found throughout as well as chair-railing and wide baseboard. Doors are 6/6 with small brass knobs. The dwelling includes a rear stair chamber. Because the dwelling was extensively renovated in the mid-20th century, further study is necessary to determine the authenticity of these features.

A rather unflattering late-19th century account of Huckleberry notes that "the new farm was much retired, was not on the public road and consisted of clearings amidst rain washed hills with deep gullies, almost impenetrable short pines and some swamp and forest timber."

Today, the site includes several nearby outbuildings including a garage, pyramidal roof workshop and shed. All date from the mid-20th century, having beaded wooden siding adhered with modern nails and a poured concrete foundation.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-19

| Period | Areas of Significance | Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> performing arts | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2000- | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> social history | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | | <input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: | |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|
| Specific dates | c. 1850 | Architect/Builder | Unknown |
| Construction dates | c. 1850 | | |

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register ☐ Maryland Register ☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

Huckleberry was the home of Thomas A. Jones, Civil War Chief Signal Agent north of the Potomac and abettor to Lincoln's assassins. Although the dwelling has been extensively altered, the site is significant as one of the County's important areas of action during the Civil War. Although Charles County, and the rest of Maryland remained officially neutral, Charles County's citizenry was overwhelmingly sympathetic to the southern cause. Because of this and because of its pivotal location along the Potomac River, the county was heavily guarded during the war in an effort to stem the extensive network of cooperation on both sides of the river. The smuggling of contraband, correspondence and people plagued the union army. Thomas A. Jones, living in Popes Creek on a narrow point of the Potomac River, was likely one of the most actively involved citizens in the Confederate cause and carried passengers, goods and mail across the river into Virginia daily.

Thomas A. Jones was born in 1820 near Port Tobacco. Although from a family of meager means, just before the Civil War, he purchased a farm on a high bluff overlooking the Potomac River at Popes Creek where he alternated between farming and fishing with the assistance a few servants and slaves. Likely because of the farm's ideal location, in 1862, Jones was appointed a member of the Confederate Secret Service by Major William Norris, chief of the Confederate Signal Service. His position was that of chief signal agent north of the Potomac which he served until the end of the war.

Near the close of the war, Jones moved to Huckleberry where he was living at the time of Abraham Lincoln's assassination and the conspirator's escape through southern Maryland. Although a handful of Charles County citizen's participated in Booth's escape, Jones had the most frequent and intimate contact with the Lincoln assassins. He visited John Wilkes Booth and his accomplice David Herold at their hiding place a total of six times, providing both food and information. Jones was exclusively responsible for planning and carrying out the details of their safe passage across the Potomac. His account of these events were published locally in The Times in 1881 and republished for sale at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.(1)

Jones first learned of the assassin's presence in the area after being summoned under false pretense to the home of Samuel Cox of Rich Hill (CH-177NR) a known Confederate sympathizer. Booth and Herold had left the home of Dr. Samuel Mudd (CH-149NR), in Bryantown after Mudd treated his broken leg. They proceeded to Cox's home near present-day Bel Alton. Cox sent his overseer Franklin Robey to lead the assassins to a Pine Thicket one mile west of his house, and about 200 yards south of the present village of Cox Station. Jones agreed to secure safe passage for the two. For six days he brought food and newspapers. Jones used a boat hidden in Dent's Meadow, which then consisted of an isolated farm near Popes Creek bisected by a stream leading into the river. Upon hearing that most of the soldiers in the area were pursuing a false lead in St. Mary's County, Jones gathered Booth and Herold and escorted them to Dent's Meadow where they were placed in Jones's boats to reach Virginia.

During his lifetime Thomas Jones worked for the Baltimore city police force and as an officer of the Maryland House of Corrections. After the War he served an appointment at the Navy Yard before returning to live in La Plata where he served as a

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name Huckleberry

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

Justice of the Peace.

To date, evidence of Jones occupancy of Huckleberry comes solely from his autobiographical accounts and local oral tradition. Land records pertaining to Huckleberry leave an unclear history of the sites development. Previously referred to as Whortleberry after a similar edible black berry, this seemingly small tract was consolidated into a large 820 acre parcel known as Light House Farm and renamed Keechland. Since 1939 it has been associated with a 235 acre parcel now owned by Roman Catholic Church and operated as the Loyola Retreat House. Much of the surrounding land including Huckleberry having 50-70 acres was owned by George Dent in the 19th century. A later survey, completed in 1918 of Keechland gives an idea of the neighborhood including Dent's Meadow (CH-163) and Ellenborough (CH-138).

ENDNOTES

(1) Jones, Thomas A. "J. Wilkes Booth: An Account of His Sojourn in Southern Maryland After the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, his Passage Across the Potomac, and his death in Virginia." J.B Mattingly, Laird & Lee, Publishers, Chicago, 1893. In Wearmouth, John M. and Roberta J. "Thomas A. Jones: Chief Agent of the Confederate Secret Service in Maryland." Stones Throw Publishing. Port Tobacco. MD. 1995, 2000.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-19

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1 of 235

Acreage of historical setting 50

Quadrangle name Popes Creek

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Huckleberry is currently associated with Charles County Property Tax Map 73, Parcel 1.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy Currey/Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Charles County Planning Dept

date 9/25/01

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town La Plata

state MD zip code 20646

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-19

Section 8 Page 1

Huckleberry
name of property
Charles County, MD
county and state

Chain of Title:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| April 1984 | Loyola Retreat House, Inc. to Corp of the Roman Catholic Clergymen. "Hickleberry" or "Part of Whortleberry" surveyed by Louis H. Steffens in 1939. 235 acres. 981/115 |
| April 1954 | Leo L. Chandler and Maude C. Chandler, his wife of Allegheny County, PA to Loyola Retreat House, Inc. 235 a. 111/119 |
| October 1939 | William Carlyle Turner and Mary Posey Turner, wife to Lee L. and Maude S. Chandler 235 a. Conveyed by several deeds to William Carlyle Turner and Robert H. Turner (d. 1932) 71/238 |
| May 1918 | From Edith R and Harris H. Bucklin of Providence, RI \$ 45,000 According to survey of 1917 by Peter Kendrick. <i>Containing 820 acres formerly known as Prospect Hill, Harrisons Gift, High Cliffs, Whittons Ditch, Whortleberry, Jordon.</i> Now known as Light House Farm, hereafter known as Keechland. Save and excepting 25 acres 33/168 |
| May 1921 | Public Auction. Sold for \$2750.00 "Part of Whortleberry Farm" adjoining "Brentfield" and acquired by George Dent in 1879 BGS 3/442 from J. Philip Stewart et al. 50-70 acres. Buildings and improvements. 38/55 |
| May 1928 | From James Lindins c/o Jeannie Lindins. 50 acres. Piece or subdivision of lot 2 George Dent's property. CP30/570. Same as a parcel deeded in January 1877, from Stewarts to James A. Thompson. Part of subdivision of September 1840- land of Menshen and Elizabeth Lloyd and J. Philip Stewart and wife to George Dent. JB 24/25 48/526 |
| June 1931 | From Luther A. Della. Small triangular piece consisting of 1/3 acre on west side of road. West of state road cut JST 3/13 from John and Susan Hoffman to Elizabeth Della and part of land conveyed to Edelen and Wilmer to Luther Della WMA 53/200 in 1931. 53/447 |

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-19

Section 9 Page 1

Huckleberry
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

Major Bibliographic References:

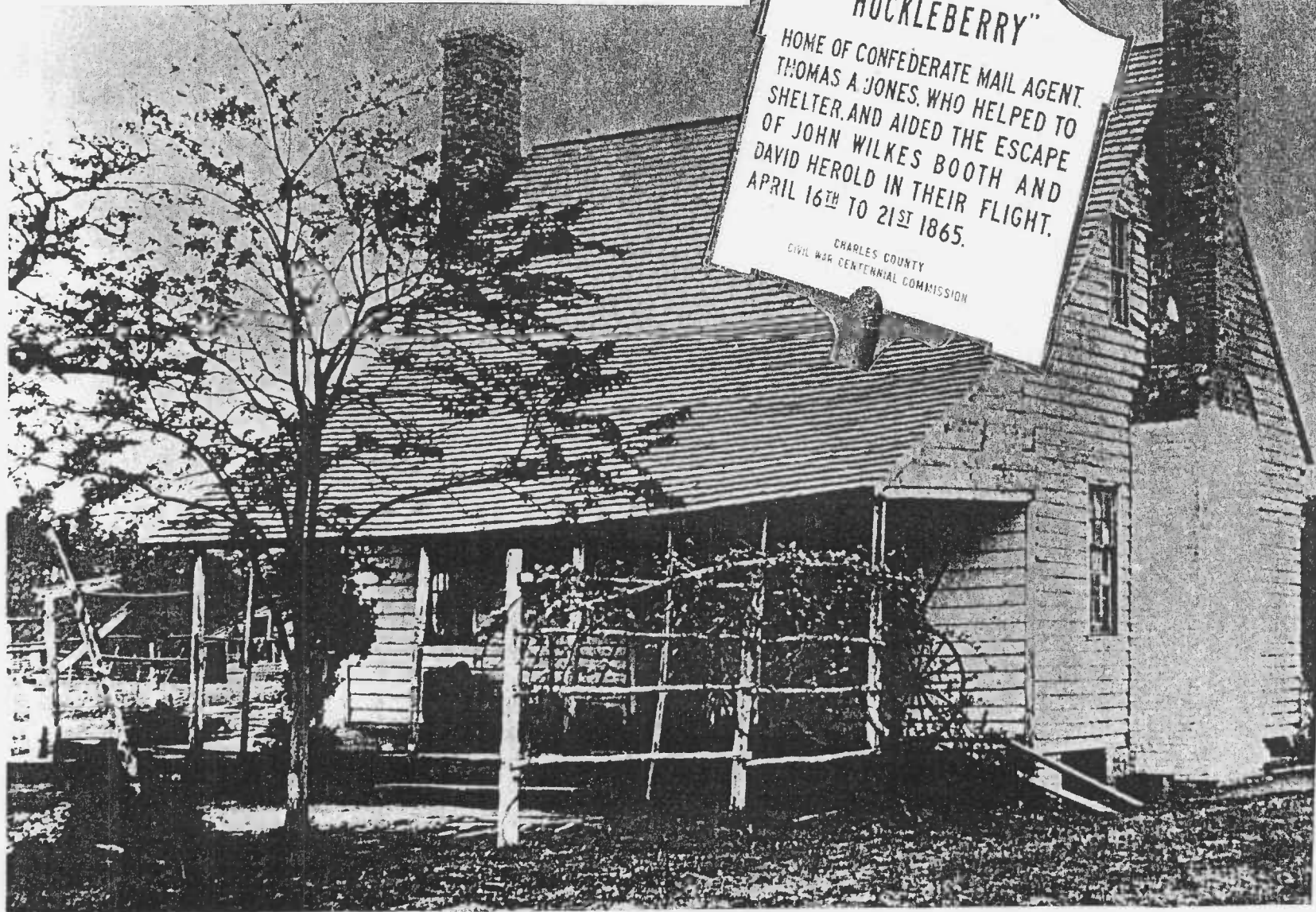
Brown, Jack D., et al. Charles County, Maryland, A History.
Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, LaPlata, Maryland;
Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland.
LaPlata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

Wearmouth, John and Roberta. Thomas A. Jones: Chief Agent of the Confederate Secret Service
In Maryland. Port Tobacco, MD: Stones Throw Publishing., 1995, 2000.

Residence of Thomas A. Jones about a mile from the Potomac River near Pope's Creek from about the end of 1863 until about 1873, called then and now, "Huckleberry."



61

FROM "THOMAS A. JONES: ... 1995; 2000 JOHN M. ROBERTA J. WEARMOUTH.

CH-19

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

Date: 8/2001

North arrow:

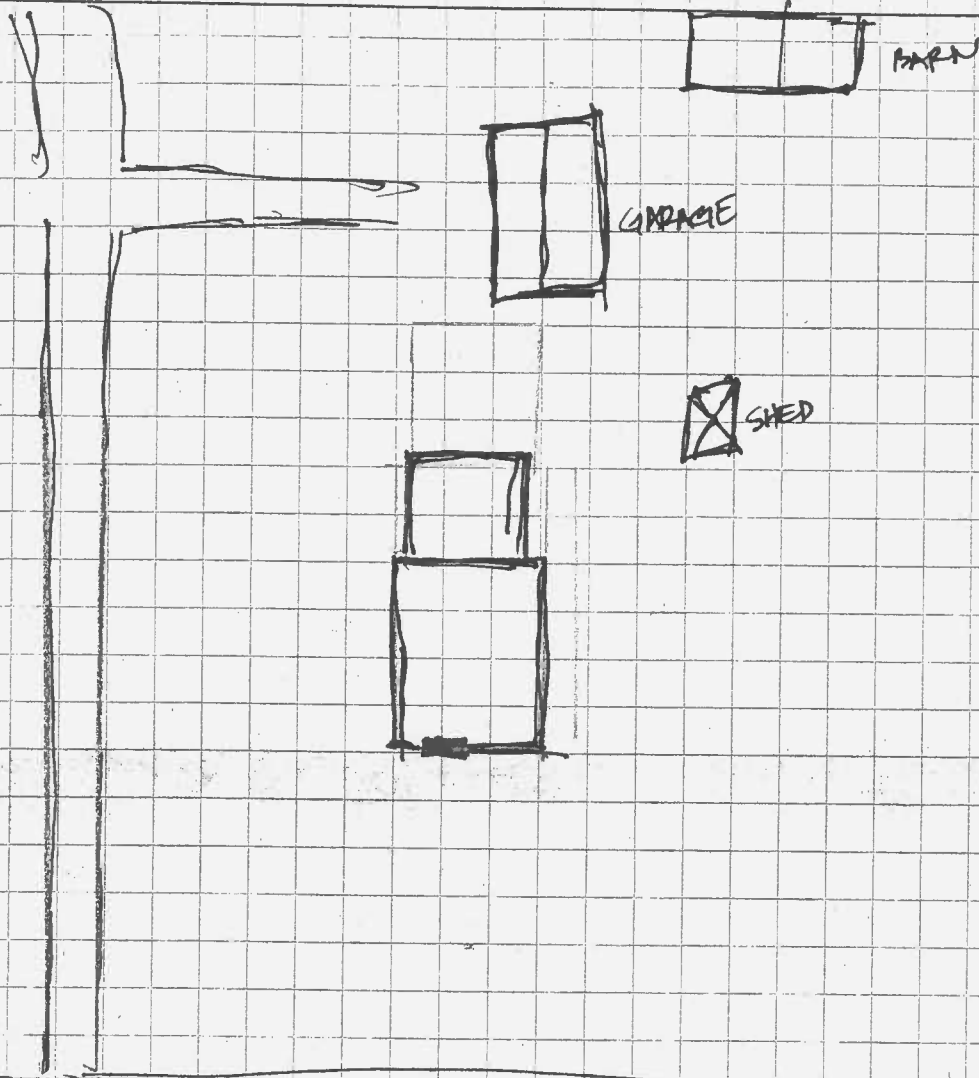
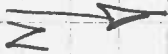
Name: HUCKLEBERRY

Address: 9270 LOYOLA RETREAT ROAD

CH - 19

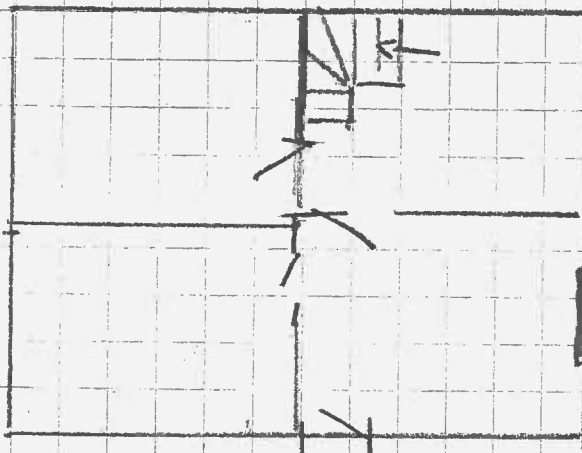
Charles County, Maryland

POPES CREEK X Vicinity



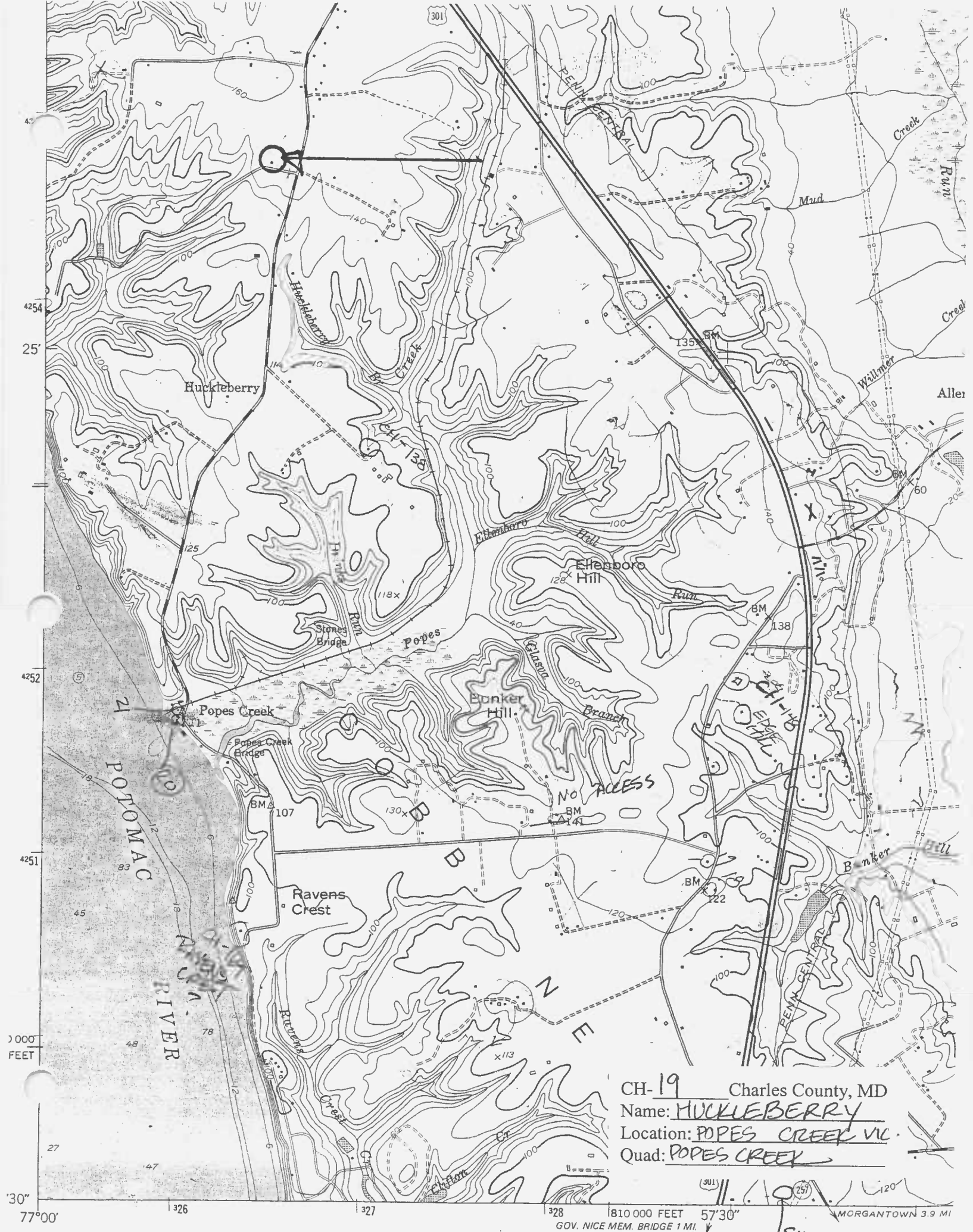
POPES CREEK ROAD

← TO POPES CREEK



1st Floor
PLAN

Not drawn to scale



CH-19 Charles County, MD
Name: HUCKLEBERRY
Location: POPES CREEK VIC.
Quad: POPES CREEK

1810 000 FEET 57'30"
GOV. NICE MEM. BRIDGE 1 MI. ↓
MORGANTOWN 3.9 MI



CH-19
HICKLEBERRY
CHARLES CO, MD

C. GORREY

8/2001

MD SIXPO

FRONT ELEVATION, LOOKING N

1 of 4



47-19

WICKLEBERRY

CHARLES CO, MD

C. CORREY

8/2001

MID SHPO

ELEVATION

2054



CH 19 HUCKLEBERRY

CHARLES CO, MD

C. CURREY

8/2001

MD-HPD

REAR ELEVATION

30x4



CH-19

HICKLEBERRY

CHARLES CO, MD

C. CURREY

2/2001

MD SHDO

REAR STAIR PASSAGE

4 of 4